

James Harbrough House
161 Tower Street
Providence
Providence County
Rhode Island

HABS No. RI-226

HABS
RI,
4-PROV,
126-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Eastern Office, Design and Construction
143 South Third Street
Philadelphia 6, Pennsylvania

JAMES BURROUGH HOUSE

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RI,
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126-

Address: 160 Power Street, Providence, Providence County,
Rhode Island.
Plat 17, lot 263.

Present Owner
and Occupant: Mr. and Mrs. Garrett D. Byrnes

Present Use: Dwelling.

Brief Statement
of Significance: This is an example of a medium-size frame house
built in 1818.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History

1. Original and subsequent owners:

- 1817 Joseph S. Cooke sells to James Burrough for \$150
"Lot marked 8 on Plat of House Lots laid out by
grantor in Young Orchard and recorded in Book #39
page 297 of Providence Records." - described as:
beginning 100' from west corner of Cooke and Power
Street, 55' to West and 180' North, 184' Southerly
bounded on land of Sarah Olney and Easterly 55'
on grantor's land. - Deed Book 40, page 220, in
Providence City Hall.
- 1874 The estate of James Burrough is sold by Lucian
Draper to Sarah F. Burrough and Elizabeth Greene
Burrough for \$1.00. - Deed Book 317, page 262, in
Providence City Hall.
- 1891 Sarah F. Burrough conveys this property to Herbert
J. Burrough (trustee of the estate) with the clause
that on her death the estate must be distributed
1/3 apiece to Mary R. Burrough, Howard D. Burrough
and Herbert J. Burrough. The property is described
as "the same premises conveyed to James Burrough
by Joseph S. Cook"- Deed Book 368, page 411, in
Providence City Hall.
- 1909 Herbert J. Burroughs dies and appoints Howard D.
Burroughs Administrator. - Wills Book 104, page
173, in Providence City Hall.

- 1912 Howard D. and Mary R. Burrough sell to Robena B Burrough for \$10 the land of same description as above "being Lot 263/Plat 17."- Deed Book 534, page 76, in Providence City Hall.
- 1913 Howard D. Burrough sells to Swinehart Tire and Rubber C. for \$500 the same premises conveyed to James Burrough by Joseph Cooke in 1817, by auction. Deed Book 530, page 106, in Providence City Hall.
- 1922 Swinehart Tire and Rubber Co. sells to Edward A. Stockwell and wife Annie May for \$100 this same property. - Deed Book 621, page 295, in Providence City Hall.
- 1944 Edward A. Stockwell sells to G. D. Byrnes et ux for \$10.00 the same property bounded as follows: "beginning at a point on Northerly line of Power Street - 100' Westerly from westerly line of Cooke Street; thence Northerly bounding Easterly on land now or lately of the Young Orchard Co. in part and in part of land now or lately of Albert and Katherine Harkness 185.73'...thence turning and running Westerly bounding Northerly on Jacobs land 50' to land now or lately of Nathaniel Fruckt and wife, thence turning and running Southerly bounding Westerly on said Fruckt land 185.76' more or less, to said Power Street, thence turning and running Easterly bounding Southerly on said Power Street 50' to the point of beginning." - Deed Book 867, page 1, in Providence City Hall.

2. Date of erection: 1818, according to historical sketch, Supplemental Information, Part I-B.

B. Supplemental Material: The following notes on the history of the house are the recollections of a grandchild of the original owner:

THE BURROUGH FAMILY

The pronunciation of this name is a little confusing to some people. The second syllable should be pronounced with the sound of "a", not with the sound of "o". I cannot say when the first of the family came over from England. Some of them were brewers. I do not know the date of the birth of my grandfather James Burrough. I never saw him, but I know that he died in 1860. He went to sea, and as I have always understood, had his own ship, or at least was in charge of one, and sailed over about all of ocean that was then generally known. His first wife was Sarah Beverly. She was never quite normal mentally, and in the year 1824 she had an illness which

made it necessary for her to be watched. One day grandfather, worn and weary while watching her, fell asleep. It was only for a moment, but it was a fatal moment. She had fled from the house. A scorching party went out, but was too late. She had thrown herself into the water.

James and Sarah had five children -- James, Sarah Frances, Edward Sheldon, Elizabeth Green, and Scabury. The following year, 1825, he married my grandmother; and the next year, 1826, a little boy was born to them. This was my father, Joseph. He was born with his feet turned in. It was characteristic of grandmother that she was determined that the deformity should be corrected, and in time this was accomplished.

The land on which the house stood that grandfather had built, before his second marriage, was built in 1817 (I should have said bought). The house was built the following year. I cannot say who was the architect and contractor, but both wood and brick were used in its construction. The neighborhood was then in the new part of the city. There were not many houses there, and my grandfather may have been prompted to build there by the fact that his brother had a house on Cooke St. (this is the old Draper homestead, from which Mr. Albert Harkness recently moved). I cannot say how many of my grandfather's children were born before they moved into the Power St. house. The two youngest were surely born there.

The house was not all built at one time, and I do not know when the ell was added. The ell comprised the rooms which in my time was the kitchen, with the rooms above it. In the earlier years they evidently let some of the rooms. Those who knew the house when we lived there will recall there was a little entry leading from our back hall to the sitting room, and that it had quite a heavy door. That was the original front door. On the first floor at the back were two bedrooms -- later they were made into one long room, which was our dining-room.

In the little south room over the kitchen, cousin Lucy Smith, in early womanhood, taught a little A, B, C, School for the children in the neighborhood. The room which we called, and used for a sitting-room was the kitchen in those early days. It contained an old fashioned brick oven, where the beans were placed on Saturday nights, ready for serving on Sundays. When we lived there an arch replaced the brick oven, and over the arch stood a figure of Franklin. Grandfather never really liked the arch -- he preferred the brick oven.

When grandfather first saw coal, he could not believe that it could burn. He said it was just hard stone, but he lived to see that it really did burn.

Grandfather's eldest son James had a store in Chicago. Edward went to sea, and was known as Captain. Seabury was a jeweler. Joseph, my father, after keeping books for a time, went into the wool business in Massachusetts and in New York.

Prepared by Antoinette F. Downing and Natalie Saltonstall
for the Providence Preservation Society
May 1962.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement

1. Architectural character: This is a medium-size, two-story frame house, built 1818, characteristic of the period.
2. Condition of fabric: Good.

B. Technical Description of Exterior

1. Overall dimensions: L-shape plan with main portion about 39' (three-bay south front); wing to northeast, about 17' x 17'.
2. Foundations: Stone
3. Wall construction: Clapboard, boards with beaded edges.
4. Porches, etc.: Side porch extends to northeast attached to rear wing. Flat roof on porch supported by two slender wood turned columns and two semicircular pilasters, with incised bands of decoration. Molded railing with square balusters.
5. Chimneys: Two inside chimneys in main block, and small end chimney on northeast wall of wing.
6. Openings:
 - a. Doorways and doors: Main entrance in east bay of south front facade, six flat panels on door, horizontal top light, paneled pilasters, entablature on brackets. Side door has three-light transom and simple mitred moldings.

- b. Windows and shutters: Six over six light double hung windows, capped with splayed wood lintels on first floor. Second floor window heads meet the cornice bed mold. Large arched window at basement level on east side at stair landing. Monitor windows are three lights, one on each side.

7. Roof:

- a. Shape: Hipped with monitor, side wing also hipped.
- b. Cornice, eaves: Simple molded cornice, boxed eaves.

C. Technical Description of Interior

- 1. Floor plans: East side entrance hall; parlor at southwest, dining room behind, kitchen beyond, library to northeast in wing.
- 2. Stairways: Main stair in entrance hall, open string, carved sunburst or fan step end ornaments, three very slender balusters per step, molded handrail, turned newel, shadow rail.
- 3. Flooring: Wide board floors.
- 4. Wall and ceiling finish: Plaster, painted or papered.
- 5. Doorways and doors: Six-panel doors in principal rooms, four panels elsewhere, raised panels, molded mitred architraves.
- 6. Trim: Paneled wainscot in parlor, molded chair rail.
- 7. Hardware: Iron latches.
- 8. Lighting: Electric.
- 9. Heating: Central heat plus fireplaces, one-story mantels; three on first floor - in parlor, dining room and library; three on second floor bedrooms.

- D. Site: House faces south on narrow, level lot. House set back slightly from sidewalk. Picket fence surrounds house; informal garden at rear of lot.

Prepared by Natalie Saltonstall
for the Providence Preservation Society
and Osmund R. Overby, Architect
National Park Service
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